

Innovation for Sustainable Development Review



BELARUS



UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

**INNOVATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
OF BELARUS**



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NOTE

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FOREWORD

Innovation is a pillar of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of approaches to economic development across the world. This is particularly prominent in Belarus, with its legacy of world-class scientific research and industrial production, where the Government has reformed its national innovation system in line with UNECE's recommendations in its first *UNECE Innovation Performance Review*, launched in 2011.

Central reforms include passing legislation to encourage commercialization of intellectual property, centralizing and improving transparency of innovation funds, and including innovation in the overall national strategy for sustainable development. However, important challenges remain. Priorities include increasing risk assessment and tolerance in funding innovative projects, improving project screening and evaluation, and strengthening the capacity for technology absorption and innovation in the private sector. Overall, setting up more dynamic inter-ministerial coordination, as well as fostering multi-stakeholder consultations to design, operate, and evaluate innovation policy, would significantly contribute to the sustainable development goals.

The *Innovation for Sustainable Development Review* shows both continuity and change with respect to previous publications in this series (i.e. *Innovation Performance Review*). On the one hand, the new format presents a general review of the national legal and institutional framework for innovation, in line with the structure of previous studies of Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Armenia and Tajikistan, as well as Belarus' first review. On the other hand, the new format includes specific chapters that highlight main findings with regard to the sustainable development goals. In the case of Belarus, these cover an assessment of the country's national development strategies in light of ongoing international initiatives and a review of recent eco-innovation projects in Government programmes and development strategies.

Innovation is a complex process that requires multi-stakeholder involvement in policymaking. UNECE advisory work in this area draws on longstanding engagement across the region. The *Innovation Performance Review* series takes a comprehensive approach, with strong country involvement and peer review of preliminary findings. I would like to thank the Government of Belarus and other stakeholders for the excellent support provided throughout this project and hope for continued joint working to assist in the implementation of the policy recommendations of the *Review* and to promote innovation for sustainable development.

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Olga Algayerova
Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

PREFACE

The practical work on the *Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Belarus* began in December 2015 with a preparatory mission to Minsk by representatives of the UNECE secretariat to establish contact and discuss the structure and content of the *Review* with the national Government institutions and other stakeholders. The main project mission took place from 14 to 18 March 2016 with the participation of a team that included representatives of the UNECE secretariat as well as international and national experts.

This *Review* reflects the outcome of a series of consultations and discussions between the *Review* team and policymakers, Government officials, representatives of academic institutions and the business community, and other innovation stakeholders of Belarus.

The draft text of the *Review* was submitted for comments to the authorities of Belarus and to a group of independent international experts who had not participated in the field mission. The key findings of the study, including its main conclusions and recommendations, were presented and discussed during a national workshop held in Minsk on 6 October 2016, hosted by the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus. Participants included members of the *Review* team, external reviewers and high-level representatives of the Government of Belarus, as well as participants from civil society institutions, universities and international organizations based in Minsk.

The final text of the *Review* was prepared for publication by the UNECE secretariat reflecting the outcome of these discussions as well as other comments and suggestions from various stakeholders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Innovation for Sustainable Development Review of Belarus was prepared by a group of international and national experts as well as by staff of the UNECE secretariat. The Review was the result of a collective effort in which the lead authors for each chapter were: Mr. Ariel Ivanier, Mr. Ralph Heinrich and Mr. Igor Severine (Chapter 1), Mr. Rumen Dobrinsky and Mr. Thomas Stahlecker (Chapter 2), Mr. Slavo Radosevic (Chapter 3), Ms. Annamaria Inzelt and Ms. Natalja Apanasovich (Chapter 4), Mr. Ariel Ivanier and Mr. Ralph Heinrich (Chapter 5). Ms. Julia Djarova, Mr. Bart Verspagen, Mr. Manfred Spiesberger and Mr. Dietrich Hesse reviewed the first draft of the Review and provided relevant suggestions. Mr. Ralph Heinrich, Mr. Christopher Athey and Mr. Ariel Ivanier led on the development of the conceptual framework of the Review and overall editing of the publication, with Ms. Ludmila Boichuk providing technical assistance.

During the discussions at a peer review national workshop held in Minsk (October 2016), the following speakers presented significant comments and suggestions on behalf of the Government of Belarus: Mr. Andrei Kosovski (First Deputy Chairman, State Committee on Science and Technology), Mr. Yevgeny Malchevsky (Head of the Department of Innovation Policy, State Committee on Science and Technology), and Mr. Alexander Snetkov (Head of the Department General for Statistics of Enterprises, National Statistical Committee). Representatives of other national innovation stakeholders also provided substantive input to the workshop, including from the following institutions: the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Belarusian State Economic University, the Academy of Public Administration, the Republication Union of Employers and the UNDP Office in Belarus.

The smooth work throughout the project was largely facilitated by the helpful support and cooperation of the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus, which was the lead national partner of UNECE in implementing this project. In particular, the efforts of Ms. Olga Meerovskaya (Head, Unit of International S&T Cooperation, Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of S&T Sphere) in support of this project were very much appreciated.

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